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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. DISUNITY PREVAILS AMONG ITALIAN POLITICIANS

EMBASSY ROME HAS SOUNDED OUT POLITICAL LEADERS CONCERNING POSSIBLE SCENARIOS WHEN FORMAL CONSULTATIONS ON THE PRESENT CRISIS COMMENCE JANUARY 12-13. THEIR WIDELY DIFFERING VIEWS ARE INDICATIVE OF THE DISUNITY WHICH PRECIPITATED THE COLLAPSE OF THE MORO GOVERNMENT:

--THE REPUBLICANS APPARENTLY FAVOR EARLY ELECTIONS, FEELING SOCIALIST DEMANDS FOR RETURNING TO THE GOVERNMENT WOULD DEFEAT ANY HOPE FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY.

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--CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC AGRICULTURE MINISTER MARCORA WANTS TO AVOID ELECTIONS BECAUSE THE PARTY HAS BEEN WEAKENED BY INTERNAL PROBLEMS AND THE WOOING OF THE MIDDLE CLASS BY THE COMMUNISTS.

--LEONE OPPOSES ELECTIONS AND MAY SEEK A FOUR-PARTY COALITION WITH THE SOCIALISTS, REPUBLICANS AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATS.

--THE SOCIALISTS ARE WORRIED ABOUT THEIR ISOLATION AND FAILURE TO ATTRACT ANTICIPATED SUPPORT FROM THE COMMUNISTS AND THE TRADE UNIONS.

EMBASSY SOURCES INDICATE THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WILL MAKE A VERY GENEROUS OFFER TO THE SOCIALISTS IN TERMS OF MINISTERIAL AND OTHER POSTS AND CHANGES IN ECONOMIC POLICY. THE SOCIALISTS, HAVING FAILED TO GRAB THE POLITICAL INITIATIVE, ARE BEHAVING LIKE A PARTY ON THE DEFENSIVE.

REUTER REPORTS THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS PUBLICLY RULED OUT LATE JANUARY 9 ANY APPROACH TO THE COMMUNISTS, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, TO JOIN ANY ALLIANCE OF PARTIES FORMING A NEW GOVERNMENT. (CONFIDENTIAL) ROME 363 AND 372, 1/9.)

2. ICELAND WILL AIR GRIEVANCES IN NATO FORUM

ICELAND'S JANUARY 8 ANNOUNCEMENT THAT IT WILL APPROACH NATO FOR THE REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES IN THE UK FISHERIES DISPUTE HAS MET WITH WIDESPREAD PUBLIC APPROVAL ACCORDING TO EMBASSY REYKJAVIK. GENERALLY PRAISING THE INITIATIVE, MEDIA AND OPPOSITION LEADERS:

--STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF NATO AS A FORUM FOR ICELAND;

--CALLED THE MEASURES A WARNING--NOT LEAST TO NATO--THAT SOMETHING MUST BE DONE.

EMBASSY COMMENT: ICELAND'S HEAVY RELIANCE ON NATO AT THIS
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CRITICAL JUNCTURE IS A TWO-EDGED SWORD. IF THE INITIATIVES DO NOT SHOW RESULTS, SKEPTICISM WILL INCREASE ABOUT THE WORTH OF NATO MEMBERSHIP WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN. ANTI-NATO FORCES BELIEVE NATO WILL PROVE TO BE IMPOTENT ON THIS ISSUE, THEREBY SUPPORTING THEIR ARGUMENT FOR A NEUTRAL ICELAND.

MEANWHILE, THE ICELANDIC COAST GUARD ANNOUNCED JANUARY 9

THAT A BRITISH FRIGATE HAD RAMMED THE ICELANDIC CUTTER THOR. AN MFA OFFICIAL TOLD AMBASSADOR IRVING THE GOI WOULD CONSIDER THE RAMMING IN THE LIGHT OF ITS WARNING OF JANUARY 8 THAT CONTINUED DELIBERATE RAMMINGS "WILL LEAD TO THE SEVERING OF RELATIONS WITH GREAT BRITAIN." (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) REYKJAVIK 39 AND 46, 1/9.)

3. INDIA: MRS. GANDHI DESCRIBES THE TIGERS AT THE GATES

IN A MEETING WITH DUTCH DIPLOMATS AND OFFICIALS, EMBASSY NEW DELHI REPORTS, MRS. GANDHI AGGRESSIVELY DESCRIBED WHAT SHE VIEWS AS THE EXTERNAL THREATS FACED BY INDIA. IN HER OPINION:

--ARMS SALES TO PAKISTAN AND OTHER NEARBY COUNTRIES ARE TAKING PLACE ON AN UNPRECEDENTED SCALE, INVOLVING WEAPONS WHICH HAVE BEEN USED AGAINST INDIA IN THE PAST.

--CHINA IS PREPARING FOR A THIRD WORLD WAR, WHICH WILL EVENTUALLY LEAD TO A EUROPE OVERRUN BY THE SOVIETS.

--INDIA'S FRONTIERS ARE NOT SECURE DUE TO CHINA'S EFFORTS TO EXERT ITS INFLUENCE OVER INDIA'S NEIGHBORS, PARTICULARLY SRI LANKA AND BHUTAN.

IN RECENT SPEECHES ON THE INTERNAL SITUATION, MRS. GANDHI JUSTIFIED THE STATE OF EMERGENCY, CITING "A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO PARALYZE THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT." SHE ALSO:

--CRITICIZED THE OPPOSITION FOR IRRESPONSIBLE ACTIVITIES, BUT STATED SHE FAVORED A DIALOGUE WITH THEM PROVIDED THEY FORSAKE VIOLENCE AND OBSTRUCTIONISM;
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--TOOK THE WESTERN PRESS TO TASK FOR FAILING TO CONDEMN THE MURDERS OF LEADERS IN BANGLADESH. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) NEW DELHI 488 AND 428, 1/9.)

4. ECUADOR: MILITARY PREPARES TO OUST PRESIDENT

REPORTS OF THE IMMINENT REMOVAL OF PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ ARE CIRCULATING WIDELY IN QUITO AND GUAYAQUIL. WHILE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT RADIO ANNOUNCEMENTS CLAIM THAT RUMORS OF THE REMOVAL OF THE PRESIDENT ARE FALSE, THE EMBASSY OBSERVES:

--THE THREE SERVICE CHIEFS APPARENTLY DECIDED JANUARY 8 THAT RODRIGUEZ HAD TO GO.

--HOWEVER, THEY DISAGREE ABOUT WHETHER A TRIUMVIRATE
OR SINGLE SUCCESSOR SHOULD REPLACE THE PRESIDENT.
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